

Message Text

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LUSAKA, JANUARY 25 -- RHODESIAN NATIONALIST LEADERS JOSHUA NKOMO AND ROBERT MUGABE LEAVE FOR MALTA LATER THIS MONTH TO GET CLARIFICATION FROM DR. OWEN (BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY) AS TO WHAT DIRECTION THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS TAKING REGARDING THE SOLUTION OF THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM.

CO-LEADER OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, MR. NKOMO, TOLD A NEWS
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CONFERENCE HERE TODAY THAT HE AND MR. MUGABE WANTED THIS CLARIFICATION "IN VIEW OF THEIR (THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S) HESITATION IN RESPECT OF THEIR OWN PROPOSALS."

IN A PREPARED STATMENT MR. NKOMO REJECTED RHODESIAN PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH'S OFFER OF AN AMNESTY TO NATIONALIST GUERRILLAS IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERNAL

SETTLEMENT TALKS NOW UNDERWAY IN SALISBURY WITH THREE INTERNALLY-BASED NATIONALISTS. "WE REJECT THE OFFER WITH THE CONTEMPT IT DESERVES. THE WAR MUST GO ON," DECLARED MR. NKOMO.

HE ADDED THAT "THE ONLY PEOPLE SMITH IS CAPABLE OF OFFERING AMNESTY TO IS THE TREACHEROUS 'GANG OF THREE' (BISHOP ABLE MUZOREWA, REVEREND NDABANINGI SITHOLE AND CHIEF JEREMIAH CHIRAU) HE IS PRESENTLY NEGOTIATING WITH."

IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, MR. NKOMO DECLARED THAT AS FAR AS THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WAS CONCERNED, MR. SMITH AND THE THREE NATIONALISTS HE IS NEGOTIATING WITH IN AN EFFORT TO REACH AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WERE NOW "IRRELEVANT" TO THE SOLUTION OF THE RHODESIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS.

EXPANDING FURTHER ON THE FORTHCOMING MALTA MEETING, MR. NKOMO SAID THE FRONT WOULD "WAIT AND SEE" WHAT DR. OWEN HAD TO SAY BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER THERE WAS A BASIS FOR OPENING NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT SETTling THE 13-YEAR OLD PROBLEM. HE EMPHASIZED THAT ALL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM MUST BE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE WAR SITUATION. HE STATED THAT "A CEASEFIRE, IF IT EVER COMES, CAN ONLY BE A CONSEQUENCE OF AN ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE OF THE CERTAINTY OF INDEPENDENCE," ADDING THAT "THE PATRIOTIC FRONT LIBERATION FORCES MUST PROVIDE THAT GUARANTEE."

MR. NKOMO CONCLUDED THAT "UPON OUR SATISFACTION (WITH DR. OWEN'S UNCLASSIFIED

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EXPLANATION) NEGOTIATIONS CAN THEN START ON THE QUESTION OF ZIMBABWE'S INDEPENDENCE." ITEM USIS LUSAKA.
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